

## Promising Programs to Reduce Teen Risk-Taking Showcased in New Urban Institute Guidebook

(Press Release)

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WASHINGTON, D.C., October 3, 2000—Amid new research on students', teachers', and parents' perceptions about sex and HIV education, a new guidebook helps program directors, practitioners, and community leaders expand their network of effective sex and HIV education and other programs for at-risk youth—bridging a long-time gap between teen risk-taking research and practice.

*Teen Risk-Taking: Promising Prevention Programs and Approaches* by Urban Institute researchers Marvin Eisen, Christina Pallitto, Carolyn Bradner, and Natalya Bolshun reviews the most recent information on successful prevention programs and their implementation. The guidebook describes fifty-one programs whose initial effectiveness has been demonstrated through scientific evaluation. The authors examine a subset of twenty-one programs that were more rigorously evaluated than the other programs and identify core elements of their success. With a panel of prevention scientists and school-based practitioners, the authors also identify key factors for schools and other community organizations to consider when deciding whether to adapt successful prevention programming elements as part of their own initiatives.

Successful programs share six core elements. They attempt to modify teens' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior so that the perceived rewards of engaging in a healthy behavior outweigh the perceived costs. The programs also target specific behavior goals with a clearly delineated plan. Programs are designed to teach skills, not just information, using student-to-student or instructor-to-student methods. The programs include a written curriculum and instructor training and feedback. Successful programs often last weeks or months and involve multiple sessions. And finally, they use a variety of techniques and instruction methods, including, for example, combinations of formal instructors, parents, and peers.

"With this guidebook, a teacher, a parent, or a community program planner can put research on teen risk-taking to use," notes Eisen, "and take an important step toward promoting responsible behavior among teens."

**Teen Risk-Taking: Promising Prevention Programs and Approaches** is available from the Urban Institute Web site, [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org), or by calling the Office of Public Affairs at (202) 261-5709.

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